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SUBJECT: DAILY SUMMARY OF JAPANESE PRESS 07/16/08

INDEX:

- (1) South Korean newspapers radically reacting to Japan's reference to Takeshima issue in teaching manual for middle schools (Sankei)
- (2) Taku Yamasaki off to China to exchange views with Vice-Foreign Minister Wu and others on North Korean issue and other matters (Mainichi)
- (3) LDP nomination of candidates creating sources of contention; "Koizumi children" left off of selection disgruntled (Asahi)
- (4) Editorial: DPJ leadership race -- Can DPJ defeat LDP in the Lower House election? (Asahi)
- (5) Consul General Maher raises question about Ginowan mayor's visit to United States to request closure of Futenma (Ryukyu Shimpo)
- (6) Ginowan Mayor Iha urges U.S. consul general to shut down Futenma (Okinawa Times)
- (7) USFJ commander stresses discipline enforcement (Ryukyu Shimpo)
- (8) Naha District Court hands down prison terms to two U.S. Marines for robbing taxi driver in 2006 (Ryukyu Shimpo)

ARTICLES:

- (1) South Korean newspapers radically reacting to Japan's reference to Takeshima issue in teaching manual for middle schools

SANKEI (Page 3) (Full)

July 16, 2008

The Education, Science and Technology Ministry released its teaching manual for middle schools that referred for the first time to the territorial dispute between Japan and South Korea over the Takeshima (Dokdo in South Korean) islets. In reaction, South Korean Ambassador to Japan Kwon Chul Hyun called on Administrative Vice Foreign Minister Mitoji Yabunaka at the Foreign Ministry yesterday and warned: "Japan has much to lose from this. I demand that Japan take proper measures (such as retracting the reference)." In response, Yabunaka explained Japan's position over the Takeshima issue and said: "It is undesirable that relations between Japan and South Korea relations become strained."

After meeting with Yabunaka, Kwon said in criticizing the Japanese government: "When (the two countries) have decided to be forward-looking and Prime Minister Fukuda has also said he will take a pro-ROK stance, this is happening. It's beyond my understanding."

(Kyodo News, Seoul)

Ambassador Kwon left Japan for home temporarily last night. At Kimpo Airport in Seoul, Kwon said that unless Japan changes its position, repairing bilateral relations would be difficult.

The National Assembly of South Korea yesterday set up a special committee to work out measures to protect the Dokdo Islands and counter distorted history and decided to send a delegation of lawmakers to Japan to lodge a protest. Protest meetings have been held in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul everyday. Eggs were

TOKYO 00001971 002 OF 008

thrown at the embassy building last night, following the previous day.

(Keiko Mizunuma, Seoul)

All newspapers on July 15 sharply criticized the Education, Science and Technology Ministry's decision to refer in a teaching manual for middle schools to the territorial dispute over the Takeshima (Dokdo) islets.

The Chosun Iibo dated July 15 made up a special edition about the Takeshima issue. Attaching a chronological table, the major national daily expressed the view that the dispute between Japan and South Korea over the islets came to surface starting in the latter half of the 1990s, when Japan began to lean to the right, attributing the cause of the dispute to the Japanese rightists.

Its editorial concluded:

"Japanese ultra-rightists have presented this strategy: Occupy the Dokdo islets in a preemptive armed attack and then bring the case to the International Court of Justice."

The editorial then stressed the need to carefully watch moves by the Japanese government and rightists, claiming: "Whatever Japan says, the Dokdo islets are South Korea's territory forever. There is no need for us to be affected by the provocations of Japan."

The Dong-A Iibo carried articles related to the Takeshima islets on the first and third pages. Its editorial, with the caption "the Dokdo Islets are South Korea's territory despite Japan's provocative action" stressed:

"Japan might tell us, in a way calculated to make us feel indebted, that it refrained from using a direct expression (specifying Japan's claim over the islets) out of consideration to Seoul. Japan might think such a frivolous, cunning measure will successfully work out. But such is nothing but an illusion ... If South Korea-Japan relations deteriorate, both sides' peace cooperation in Northeast Asia, as well as efforts to solve North Korea's nuclear development problem will be negatively affected. Japan will have to assume the responsibility as a whole."

The JoongAng Iibo referred to the fact that the Takeshima issue was

dealt in the teaching manual on the same basis as the Northern Territories issue. It then noted that Japan began to demand the islets be returned to it, going beyond its conventional claims to the islets.

Its editorial claimed:

"If Japan reflected on its past imperialist aggression and gave consideration to a future-oriented South Korea-Japan relationship, Japan naturally should have refrained from mentioning the Dokdo issue. ... That's why Japan is defined as a nation that betrays others behind its smile and is not qualified to become a leader. ... Japan's provocation is tantamount to a virtual declaration of war over the right of possession. ... Teaching children that the Dokdo islets are Japan's territory is a different matter from Japan's claim to the islets."

(2) Taku Yamasaki off to China to exchange views with Vice-Foreign

TOKYO 00001971 003 OF 008

Minister Wu and others on North Korean issue and other matters

MAINICHI NET (Full)

1:37 p.m., July 16, 2008

Former LDP Vice-President Taku Yamasaki departed this morning from Haneda Airport for Beijing. During his stay there until July 18, Yamasaki is expected to meet with Chinese government officials, including Vice-Foreign Minister Wu Dawei, to exchange views on North Korea's denuclearization, normalizing diplomatic ties between Japan and North Korea and other matters. Yamasaki is accompanied by former Defense Agency Director-General Gen Nakatani, Lower House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Katsuei Hirasawa and Senior Vice-Finance Minister Hiroshi Moriyama of the Parliamentary League to Promote Diplomatic Normalization between Japan and North Korea chaired by Yamasaki.

(3) LDP nomination of candidates creating sources of contention; "Koizumi children" left off of selection disgruntled

ASAHI (Page 4) (Almost full)

July 12, 2008

The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) is now endorsing candidates for single-seat constituencies for the next Lower House election. Since it cannot expect in the next general election to do as well as it did in the previous one due to the sagging approval ratings for the Fukuda cabinet, it is drastically axing would-be candidates for competitive constituencies, based on the criterion whether they have a solid support base or not. "Koizumi children" who have been left off of the selection are increasingly dissatisfied with the move.

The LDP Election Committee on July 4 informally chose new candidates for three constituencies, including the Lower House Hokkaido No. 1 Constituency. It is set to informally endorse a new candidate for the Nagano No. 2 Constituency on the 16th. Apart from constituencies where the selection of candidates is underway, only seven constituencies -- three in Hokkaido, two in Iwate, one in Fukushima and one in Hiroshima -- remain unfilled. It is now possible for the LDP to endorse candidates in most of the 300 single-seat constituencies.

There is only about a year to go until the term of office of Lower House members expires in September 2009. Since the LDP won a landslide victory in the 2005 Lower House election, it has no choice but to make adjustments with regard to candidates, including the possibility of not endorsing incumbent Lower House members. At this time of year when the regular Diet session has been adjourned and Lower House members are soon to visit their home constituencies, the Election Committee has hurriedly undertaken final coordination for the selection of candidates for constituencies where this has yet to be done. Chairman Makoto Koga on the 10th underscored at a study meeting of his faction, "There is not much time left until the term of office of Lower House members expires."

However, even if the party's Election Committee officially endorses

candidates, there remain sources of contention in many constituencies. In particular, "Koizumi children," first-term Lower House members elected in bulk in the previous election, are having trouble being officially endorsed by the party.

Gaku Hasegawa, a corporate executive, was informally endorsed as a

TOKYO 00001971 004 OF 008

candidate to run in the Hokkaido No. 1 Constituency. However, Taizo Sugiura, one of the "Koizumi children," for the Minami Kanto proportional representative bloc at the end of last year revealed his intention to run in the next Lower House election from that constituency. He is determined to run in the election even as an independent, saying, "There is no need to be officially endorsed by the party when looking to the opinion of voters."

There are similar sources of contention in constituencies where those who opposed postal privatization and officially endorsed new candidates competed in the previous election. The Election Committee informally endorsed candidates for five out of six constituencies where two incumbent lawmakers have been competing for official endorsements. Former General Council Chairman Mitsuo Horiuchi won party endorsement for the Yamanashi No. 2 Constituency.

Former Education Minister Kosuke Hori has been informally chosen as a candidate for the Saga No. 3 Constituency. Motoko Hirotsu, a first-term Lower House member, on June 26 went to the Election Committee Headquarters. Koga told her, "We have determined that you would not be able to win." However, Hirotsu was not convinced, saying, "I volunteered to run in the previous election because I thought the party needed a candidate who was in favor of postal privatization for last year's election, in which postal privatization was a campaign issue. The informal selection of a candidate this time is inconsistent with that."

Since the next Lower House election is expected to be fierce with the reins of government at stake, the LDP has few options. One senior official of the Election Committee said, "There cannot be a boost like the one we received in the previous election. It cannot be helped that those who have been reinstated in the party because of a solid support base and those who hail from home constituencies are deemed as candidates who can win."

(4) Editorial: DPJ leadership race -- Can DPJ defeat LDP in the Lower House election?

ASAHI (Page 3) (Full)  
July 16, 2008

The popularity of Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) President Ichiro Ozawa appears to have suddenly been given a boost. With the DPJ presidential election coming on Sept. 21, a chorus of voices in the party supporting the reelection of Ozawa for a third term has become increasingly stronger.

Moreover, views calling for the uncontested reelection of Ozawa are coming out one after the other in the DPJ. With the possibility of dissolution of the House of Representatives for a snap election drawing closer, the DPJ is trying to solidify itself like a rock.

Although many DPJ lawmakers are unhappy with Ozawa's policies and political methods, there are no moves to field rival candidates against him. DPJ members are concerned that if the presidential race is contested by two or more candidates, cracks would appear in the party and it would consequently lose its sense of unity.

Can the DPJ assume the reins of government as the largest opposition party?

The DPJ won a landslide victory in last summer's House of

TOKYO 00001971 005 OF 008

Councillors election. Its basic strategy is to aim at taking over political power by winning the next Lower House election. To that

end, the party should make the presidential race, which takes place once in two years, an opportunity to gain public confidence and expectations.

The meaning of the party leadership race is crystal clear. The DPJ has to show the public specifically how Japanese politics and society will change if it holds the reins of government. It should come up with a clear strategy to that end. For short, the DPJ must make voters understand its seriousness about assuming power.

Policies are important above anything else. For example, how will the party respond to the questions posed by former President Seiji Maehara? During the campaign for the Upper House election, the DPJ set forth such policy measures as compensating the incomes of individual farmers. It argued that the 15.3 trillion yen needed for such compensation would be covered by eliminating the wasteful use of tax revenues by government agencies. Maehara has reiterated that such a plan would not be effective.

It is unusual that the incumbent president and former party heads are at odds over such a basic policy. Voters will probably shrink away from the DPJ in the election. Although Ozawa is predominant in the DPJ, his popularity among the public is low.

According to a poll conducted by the Asahi Shimbun, 61 PERCENT said that they did not particularly appreciate or appreciate at all Ozawa's words and deeds. Toward the question about which person -- Ozawa or Fukuda -- was suitable for the prime minister's post, 37 PERCENT said Fukuda, while 28 PERCENT said Ozawa.

Criticism is still fresh of Ozawa's negative stance toward Fukuda by repeatedly rejecting the prime minister's nominee for governor of the Bank of Japan (BOJ). We wonder whether such a strategy is effective for bringing about political change.

In order to win over the voters, it is vital to hold open debate on policies and strategy for political change by more than one candidate. In that respect, the DPJ should be aware that that is the way the ruling Liberal Democratic Party operates.

It is regrettable that the DPJ plans to avoid a presidential election using the inward-looking argument that bad blood would linger in the party if one were carried out. Any DPJ lawmaker who thinks he or she is qualified for the presidential post should run in the upcoming race.

(5) Consul General Maher raises question about Ginowan mayor's visit to United States to request closure of Futenma

RYUKYU SHIMPO (Page 2) (Full)  
July 16, 2008

Urasoe

Ginowan Mayor Yoichi Iha called on U.S. Consul General Kevin Maher at the Consulate General in Urasoe on July 15 ahead of his visit to the United States to seek the elimination of the danger of Futenma Air Station. Explaining that Futenma Air Station is violating the (U.S.) safety standards, the mayor asked that the airfield be shut down. In response, Consul General Maher repeated the past view,

TOKYO 00001971 006 OF 008

saying: "In order to maintain the security arrangements, Futenma Air Station cannot be shut down. (To remove dangerous aspects), there is no other option but to relocate it to the Henoko district."

Consul General Maher raised a question about the effectiveness of Mayor Iha's planned visit to the United States, noting: "I hear that one cannot make an appointment with U.S. Pacific Command headquarters or with Marine Corps Forces, Pacific, headquarters. The point of contact regarding the security setup should be between governments."

About the question of the safety standards of the airfield, the consul general indicated that the Henoko relocation plan is the best, saying: "The mayor has cited the Air Installation Compatible

Use Zone (AICUZ) Program (guidelines on the use of areas around airport facilities) in describing a violation of the U.S. military safety standards. The AICUZ is designed to control building (houses) outside bases, and it cannot control that here (in Japan). The population density around Futenma Air Station is increasing. That is why the governments of the United States and Japan have agreed on the relocation."

Mayor Iha is scheduled to visit U.S. Pacific Command headquarters in Hawaii and other places on his six-day four-night trip to the United States to seek the closure of Futenma Air Station by pointing out the airfield's violation of the safety standards and other matters. The mayor yesterday made similar requests to the LDP prefectural chapter and the New Komeito prefectural headquarters. On July 16, he is expected to make requests to the Okinawa Defense Bureau, U.S. Marines Corps, Okinawa, foreign policy department, Foreign Ministry Okinawa office, and other places.

(6) Ginowan Mayor Iha urges U.S. consul general to shut down Futenma

OKINAWA TIMES (Page 2) (Full)  
July 16, 2008

Ginowan

Ginowan Mayor Yoichi Iha, who is endeavoring for an early closure and return of the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station, visited on July 15 the U.S. Consulate General and LDP and New Komeito prefectural headquarters and delivered letters seeking cooperation for an early settlement of the matter. Consul General Kevin Maher simply repeated the U.S.' previous position, saying: "The United States is also aware of Ginowan's concerns and the plan to relocate (Futenma functions) to the Henoko district will be quickly implemented."

Mayor Iha pointed out that the city's actual condition does not meet the Futenma master plan, which specifies the establishment of a clear zone (where the use of land is prohibited). Indicating that (Futenma Air Station) is not in line with the Air Installation Compatible Use Zone (AICUZ) Program restricting the use of areas around airports in the United States, the mayor emphatically said, "A situation that does not meet the safety standards is intolerable; the airfield must be shut down."

In response, Consul General Maher said: "The AICUZ is designed to control building (houses) in areas around bases in the United States; it does not apply to areas in Japan. For the sake of the

TOKYO 00001971 007 OF 008

U.S.-Japan security arrangements, we cannot shut down (Futenma Air Station). The question of danger will be resolved by relocating it to another site in the prefecture."

Mayor Iha will visit the Okinawa Defense Bureau and the Foreign Ministry Okinawa office on July 16 and the Defense Ministry, Foreign Ministry, and Environment Ministry on the 17th to make similar requests.

(7) USFJ commander stresses discipline enforcement

RYUKYU SHIMPO (Page 2) (Full)  
July 16, 2008

U.S. Forces Japan Commander Lt. Gen. Rice, meeting the press yesterday in Tokyo, indicated that the U.S. military would make further efforts to strengthen discipline in connection with the heinous crimes committed by its personnel. "We want to reduce the off-base crime rate of U.S. military personnel to below 50 PERCENT of the Japanese crime rate," Rice said.

In May, the USS George Washington, a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier of the U.S. Navy, caught fire when she was at sea. "Repair work is well underway," Rice said. With this, he indicated that the George Washington's deployment to Yokosuka in Kanagawa Prefecture would not be delayed too much (from August, the initial schedule for

arrival). "We are now investigating the cause of the fire, and we will announce it as soon as we find it," he said.

In addition, Rice also said North Korea is a "potential threat" to security in the surrounding area. He also said, "It's important for U.S. forces to further promote military and personnel exchanges with China and Russia."

Rice repeatedly stressed that the realignment of U.S. forces in Japan would be carried out in accordance with the agreement reached between the Japanese and U.S. governments.

(8) Naha District Court hands down prison terms to two U.S. Marines for robbing taxi driver in 2006

RYUKYU SHIMPO (Page 23) (Abridged slightly)  
July 16, 2008

A trial was held on July 15 at the Naha District Court for a private, 21, and Pvt. Edward L. Miller Jr., 22, both attached to U.S. Marine Corps Camp Schwab, both of whom have been indicted on suspicion of injuring and robbing a 64-year-old taxi driver on a street in Okinawa City in July 2006. The former was 19, minor in Japan, at the time of the incident. Judge Shinichi Rai sentenced Miller and the other to two years and 10 months in prison (prosecution sought five years in prison each).

Judge Rai said that the two had committed the crime without careful consideration even though they were not pressed for money and that there was no room for leniency. The judge also said that although there were some discrepancies in the statements by the two, they played equally major roles in carrying out the robbery.

The judge also indicated that the two were still young and that there were some favorable factors indicative of their rehabilitation, such as that they had sent letters of apology to the

TOKYO 00001971 008 OF 008

victim.

CEKUTA